

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES PRIORITY

AMCONSUL LUANDA PRIORITY

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DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY PRIORITY

USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 801

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: CONSTA GOMES ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT: COMMENT

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REF: (A) LISBON 793; (B) LISBON 796 (NOTAL); (C) USNATO 710

1. BESIDES ANNOUNCING APRIL 12 DATE FOR ELECTIONS TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, COSTA GOMES FEB 10 SPEECH WAS A STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS. HE DREW UP A BALANCE SHEET OF PAST NINE MONTHS AND SET FORTH MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD CONCEPTS WHICH GOP HOPES WILL GUIDE PARTY ACTIVITIES IN PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. IT WAS A CAREFULLY-DRAFTED ADDRESS WHICH WILL HEARTEN MODERATES WHILE NOT ALIENATING ANY OF THE COALITION PARTIES NOW IN THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

2. FOREIGN POLICY AND AZORES: DISPLAYING SENSITIVITY TO OFT-REPEATED EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN EMANATING FROM FOREIGNERS, COSTA GOMES LINKED UNNAMED "FOREIGN STATESMEN" WHO WARN OF THE EXCESSIVE ACCELERATION OF REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS TO "IDEALISTS" WHO COMPLAIN ABOUT SLOW PACE OF REVOLUTION. HE CLAIMED THAT THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS HAD AVERTED EXPLOITATION OF PORTUGAL'S DOMESTIC SITUATION, WITHOUT ELABORATION ON THIS POINT.

3. AZORES AGREEMENT WAS LINKED WITH CONCORDAT IN NEUTRAL CONTEXT, LABELING THEM "FUNDAMENTAL INTERESTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE NEAR FUTURE." (IN LIGHT OF GOP INERTIA ON AZORES, WE READ THIS AS A PERSONAL OVERTURE TO THE U.S. THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH COSTA GOMES' SYMBOLIC GESTURE AT TIME AMBASSADOR PRESENTED CREDENTIALS.)

4. PLURALIST DEMOCRACY: COSTA GOMES REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR PLURALIST DEMOCRACY, AND NEED TO AVOID AUTOCRATIC POWER AND DICTATORSHIPS. IN PORTUGUESE CONTEXT, THIS IS AN OBLIQUE -- BUT READILY UNDERSTANDABLE -- SWIPE AT THE EXTREME LEFT, SINCE ONLY DICTATORSHIP IN PAST HAS COME FROM RIGHT.

5. EXTREMISTS LEFT AND RIGHT: COSTA GOMES SEVERELY CRITICIZED EXTREME LEFT AND RIGHT, THEREBY LINKING THEM BOTH AS ENEMIES OF PORTUGAL'S FUTURE. WITHOUT MENTIONING ANY POLITICAL PARTY BY NAME, HE CASTIGATED "PSEUDO-REVOLUTIONARY OPPORTUNISM," "PSEUDO-REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURES," "EXTREMIST CURRENTS OF THOUGHT BY FASCISTS OR PSEUDO-REVOLUTIONARIES," "SELLERS OF ILLUSIONS...CULTIVATORS OF HATE AND VIOLENCE...BALEFUL MANIPULATORS OF PUBLIC OPINION." IN INDIRECT BUT CLEAR

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ALLUSION TO EXTREME LEFT COSTA GOMES SAID: "LET US REJECT PARTIES OR DOCTRINES THAT OFFER VIOLENCE AND HATE IN THE PRESENT IN EXCHANGE FOR A SUPPOSED FUTURE PARADISE TO WHICH SUCH A PATH WOULD NEVER LEAD."

6. AFM AND MILITARY: REFERENCES TO THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT WERE FEW, BUT INVARIABLY POSITIVE AS WAS TO BE EXPECTED. GUIDING ROLE OF AFM WAS MENTIONED IN GENERAL TERMS, AGAIN AS

EXPECTED.

7. ADVICE TO POLITICAL PARTIES: TURNING TO THE "AUTHENTIC PARTIES" REPRESENTING "GENUINE SECTORS OF THE PEOPLE," COSTA GOMES RECOMMENDED THAT THEY STRESS UNITY AND LEAVE DOCTRINAL HAIR-SPLITTING FOR FUTURE. THIS WILL PROBABLY TURN OUT TO BE A CHIMERICAL HOPE ON HIS PART, PARTICULARLY IN THE HEAT OF AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

8. REVOLUTIONARY RHETORIC: SPEECH WAS LARDED WITH FASHIONABLY LEFT-WING PHRASEOLOGY, NOW COMMON CURRENCY HERE. COSTA GOMES CLAIMED, INTER ALIA, THAT GOP HAD INTRODUCED AGRARIAN REFORM WHICH WILL COME AS A SURPRISE TO PORTUGUESE FARM WORKERS. HE ALSO TOOK A FEW MILD JABS AT "CAPITALIST INTERESTS" WITHOUT, CRITICIZING PROFITS OR THE PROFIT-MOTIVE.

9. POPULAR DEMOCRATIC LEADER FRANCISCO BALSIMAO WELCOMED COSTA GOMES ADDRESS IN DISCUSSION WITH US FEB 11. BALSIMAO TERMED IT AN EXCELLENT ADDRESS, WHICH SAID THINGS THAT NEEDED SAYING. AT THE SAME TIME HE NOTED QUITE CORRECTLY THAT THE TRUE TEST OF THE AFM'S INTENTIONS WOULD COME DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHICH IS NOW BEGINNING.

10. USNATO MAY DRAW ON ABOVE AS DESIRED AT FEB 11 PERMREPS MEETING ON PORTUGAL.
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